



Student Achievement in South Carolina

2007 School and District Report Card Data Brief

The rating system is built upon an aspiration that SC's student achievement is to be ranked in the top half of states nationally by 2010.

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL SCHOOL AND DISTRICT RATINGS are released at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, November 15, 2007. These ratings, developed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Accountability Act of 1998, document South Carolina's efforts to improve the performance of its students and schools.

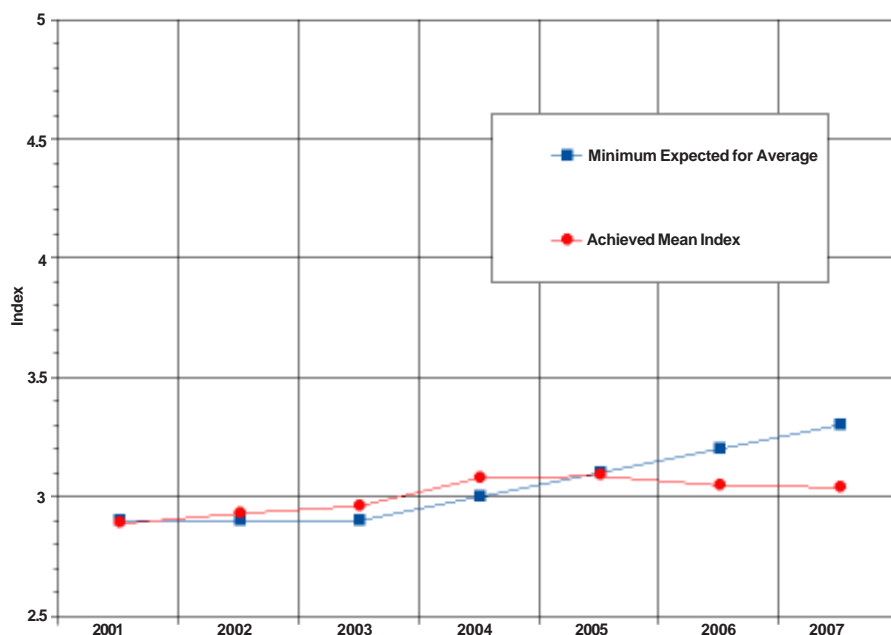
Generally, the ratings demonstrate our continuing struggle to be nationally competitive. The rating system is built upon an aspiration that South Carolina's student achievement is to be ranked in the top half of states nationally by the year 2010.

This year's performance for elementary and middle schools is influenced by declines in mathematics and English language arts as measured by the state testing program. Fifty-seven percent of schools experienced declines in PACT performance in English language arts and 42 percent experienced declines in mathematics.

At the high school level we experienced lowering of the graduation rate. This may be the result of stronger and more accurate databases. This also is the first year that end-of-course assessments are included in the high school ratings.

Educators express concern about negative perceptions of school performance resulting from the increase in expectations through 2010. The increase in expectations is structured to shift the lens through which we view our educational system from an internal, state-based focus to a national focus. It is an unsettling shift, but a necessary one if we are to rank in the top half of states.

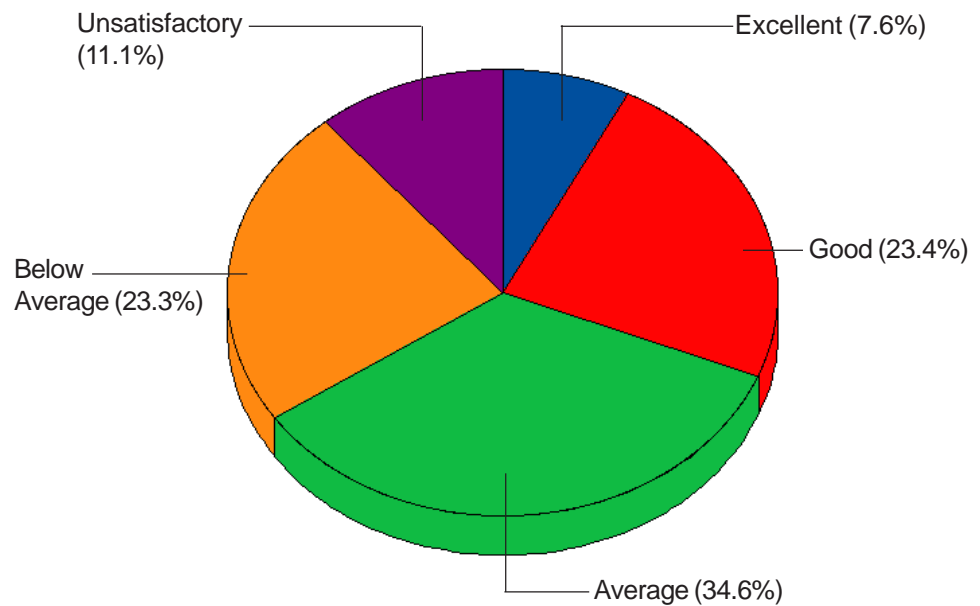
South Carolina has made strong progress, but not enough. Ten years ago we committed to comprehensive improvements and changes in South Carolina's status. Many have described it as a journey which may require decades of dedication. We do not believe it is time to step away from that journey, however difficult staying the course may be.



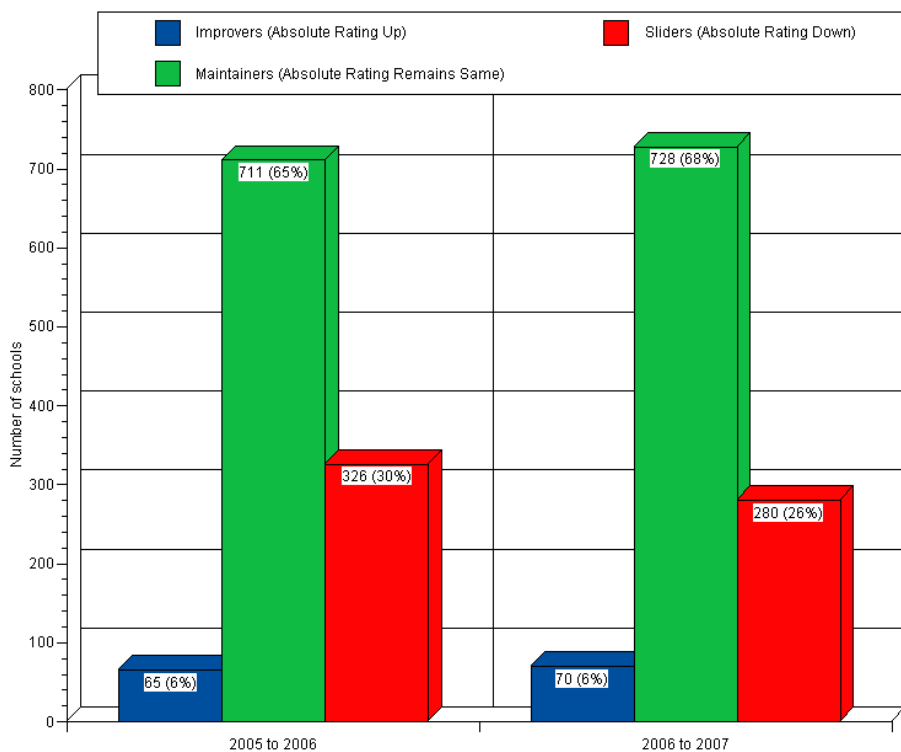
Year	Minimum Expected for Average	Achieved Mean Index
2001	2.9	2.89
2002	2.9	2.93
2003	2.9	2.96
2004	3.0	3.08
2005	3.1	3.09
2006	3.2	3.05
2007	3.3	3.04

SC student enrollment by 2007 School Rating

Over 65% of South Carolina's students are enrolled in a school rated Average or above.



SC Schools: “Improvers”, “Maintainers”, and “Sliders”



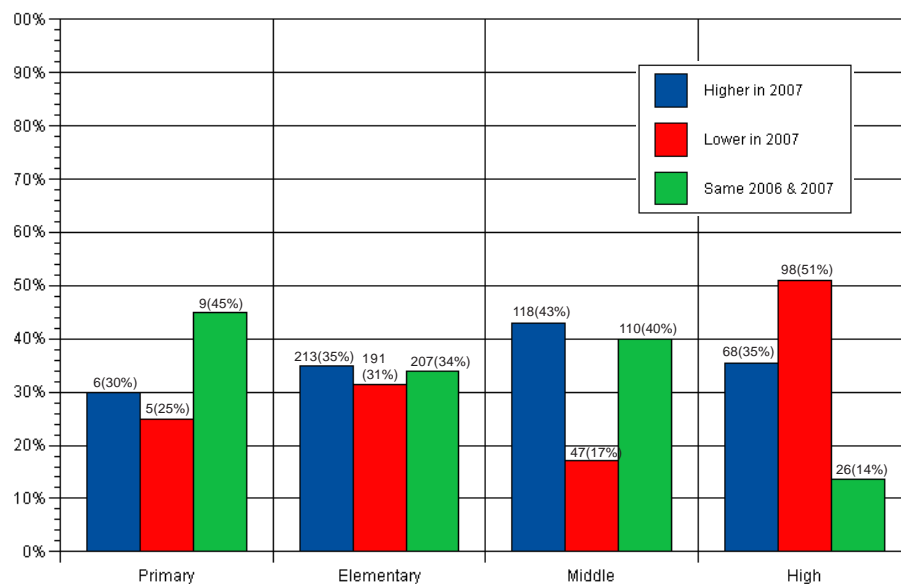
In 2007, 68 percent of schools maintained their rating.

The indexes indicate great variation in student and school performance

Why It Matters: About one-third of schools earned a higher index and one-third earned a lower index. Highly effective organizations cannot succeed with this variability. Each of us, individually and collectively, must examine our work and resolve those issues that are precluding not only higher performance, but consistent performance.

Key Findings: Absolute indexes determine the Absolute rating for schools. Statewide, 37 percent of schools earned a higher Absolute index; 32 percent maintained the same index; and 31 percent lowered their index. In some cases, the index is higher but not high enough to earn a higher rating. A total of 213 elementary schools earned a higher index in 2007 than 2006. Additionally, 118 middle schools and 68 high schools earned a higher index.

Comparison of Absolute Indexes in 2006 & 2007



Over 50 percent of high schools had lower absolute indexes in 2007 than 2006.

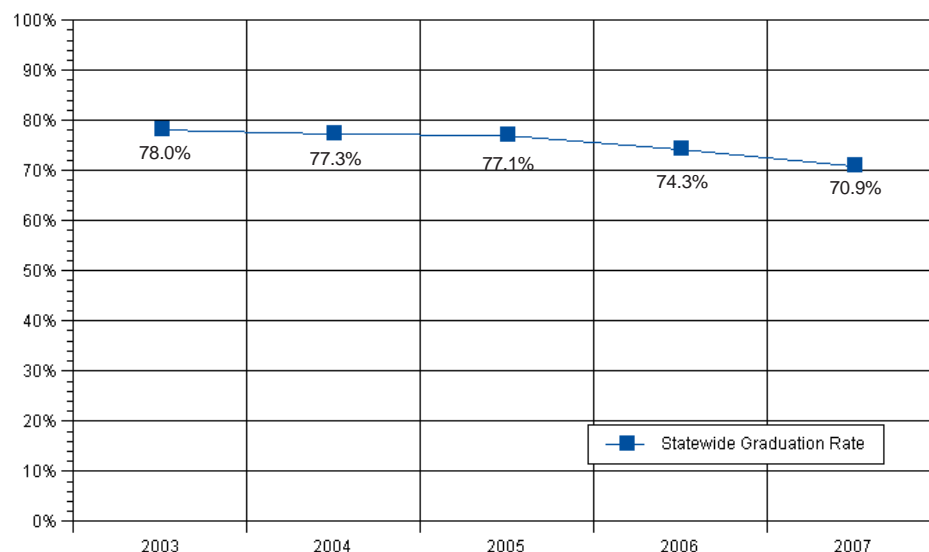
The graduation rates decreased.

Why It Matters: Young people who do not complete high school are unprepared to remain competitive in a global economy and earn significantly less over their lifetimes. Studies have found that young adults with low education and skill levels are more likely to live in poverty and to receive government assistance.¹ High school dropouts are likely to stay on public assistance longer than those with at least a high school degree. Further, those without a high school degree are more likely to become involved in crime.²

The on-time graduation rate is the percentage of all students (including students with disabilities) enrolled for the first time in grade nine four years prior to the year of the report card who earn a standard high school diploma (not GED), adjusted for transfers in and out of school.

Key Findings: At the high school level, schools report lower graduation rates. This finding may be the result of stronger databases. We anticipate increasing accuracy as databases are affected by the phase-in of the unique student identifier system.

Statewide graduation rates over time



¹Source: Boisjoly, J., Harris, K., and Duncan, G., 1998. "Initial Welfare Spells: Trends, Events, and Duration," *Social Service Review*, 72 (4), 466 - 492; Moore, K., Glei, D., Driscoll, A., Zaslow, M., and Redd, Z. (in press). "Poverty and Welfare Patterns: Implications for Children," *Journal of Social Policy*.

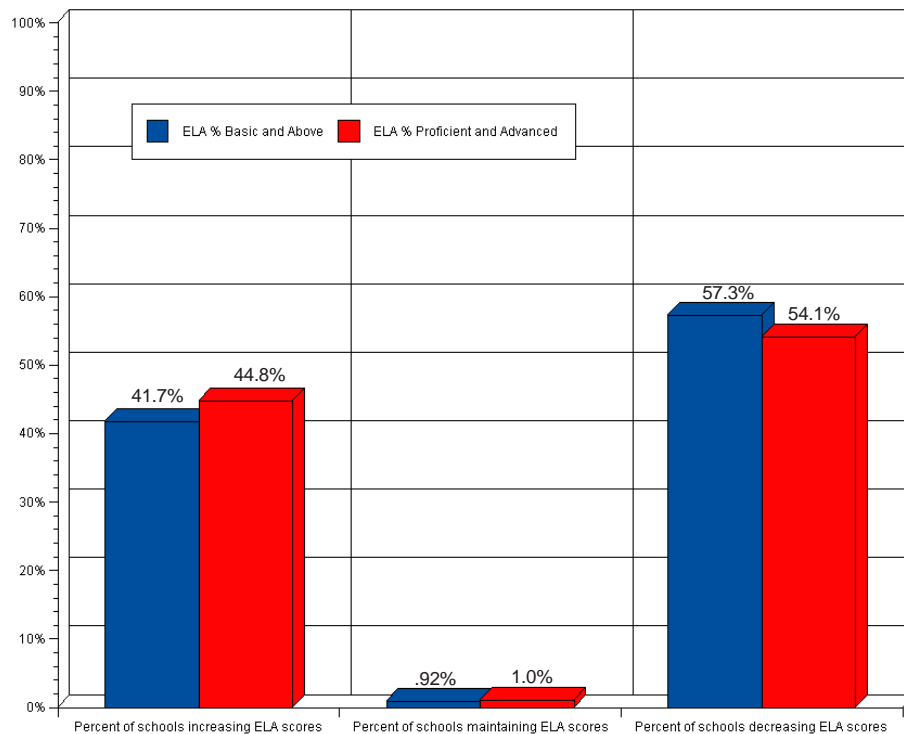
²Source: Freeman, R. (1996). "Why Do So Many Young American Men Commit Crimes and What Might We Do About It?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 10(1), 25 - 42.

Reading remains a critical academic need area

Why It Matters: No content area is more fundamental to student success than reading. If a student cannot read on a proficient level in 8th grade, he only has a 50 percent likelihood of graduating from high school on-time.³ Early language development is key, followed by advanced comprehension skills and analytical skills.

Key Findings: Although English Language Arts (ELA) PACT performance scores statewide remained fairly stable from 2006 to 2007, 57 percent of schools experienced declines in PACT performance in ELA, at the Basic and above level. At the Proficient or Advanced performance level, 54 percent of schools declined in ELA PACT performance.

ELA PACT Performance by school, from 2006 to 2007



³Source: Miley, Harry (2003). "Executive Summary: The Relationship Between Reading Proficiency and High School Graduation Rates in South Carolina." http://www.scpairs.org/PDF/Harry_Miley_Exec_Summary.pdf.

To move South Carolina, improvement must happen everywhere.

Why It Matters: Some schools and districts in challenging situations are succeeding. Schools in Saluda County enroll a very diverse population and experience the challenges associated with staffing rural schools. Yet, over the last five years the school district has made dramatic gains in student achievement.

Historic underachievement threatens many areas of South Carolina. Not only must we get better, we must get better at a faster rate and with young people whom we have been unsuccessful reaching historically.

Key Findings: Twelve percent of the students who took the PACT in 2007 were in the 13 counties around the “I-95 Corridor.” In ELA, those students account for 18 percent of the students who scored Below Basic; 11 percent of the students who scored Basic or Above; and 8 percent scoring Proficient or Advanced.

2007 PACT Performance by county

Subject	Performance	*13 I-95 counties (%) ¹ [%] ²	**33 non-I-95 counties (%) ¹ [%] ²	All 46 counties (%) ¹ [%] ²
ELA	Below Basic	(17.6%) [34.1%]	(82.4%) [22.2%]	(100%) [23.7%]
	Basic or Above	(10.6%) [65.9%]	(89.4%) [77.7%]	(100%) [76.3%]
	Proficient or Advanced	(8.1%) [23.4%]	(91.9%) [37.1%]	(100%) [35.4%]
ELA Number Tested		36,520 (12.2%)	262,093 (87.8%)	298,613 (100%)

Subject	Performance	13 I-95 counties (%) ¹ [%] ²	33 non-I-95 counties (%) ¹ [%] ²	All 46 counties (%) ¹ [%] ²
Math	Below Basic	(18.1%) [34.8%]	(81.9%) [22.4%]	(100%) [24.0%]
	Basic or Above	(10.6%) [65.1%]	(89.4%) [77.6%]	(100%) [76.0%]
	Proficient or Advanced	(7.9%) [20.8%]	(92.1%) [34.3%]	(100%) [32.7%]
Math Number Tested		37,958 (12.4%)	267,605 (87.6%)	305,563 (100%)

(%)¹ Row Percent -- Percentage of all students at performance level statewide
[%]² Percent of County Group

*Allendale, Bamberg, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Hampton, Jasper, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, and Williamsburg

**Abbeville, Aiken, Anderson, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Cherokee, Chester, Chesterfield, Colleton, Dorchester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Georgetown, Greenville, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, Laurens, Lexington, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee, Pickens, Richland, Saluda, Spartanburg, Sumter, Union, and York